# THE PRESENT AGNOSTICISM

AND

# THE COMING THEOLOGY.

An Opening Lecture

AT

MANCHESTER NEW COLLEGE, LONDON,

NINETY-FOURTH SESSION, 1879-80.

BY

CHARLES B. UPTON, B.A., B.Sc.

PROFESSOR OF MENTAL AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

WILLIAMS AND NORGATE,

14, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON;
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# THE PRESENT AGNOSTICISM AND THE COMING THEOLOGY.

THE revolving months have again brought us to the day when we must resume our appointed work—the unfettered study of Theology. There is some gratification in the thought that the principle of free inquiry in reference to theological no less than to scientific researches, which this College has from its origin asserted and exemplified, is now admitted by the vast majority of cultivated thinkers to be both sound and indispensable. It is true that as yet hardly any other academical institution in this country has put this principle into practice: for almost universally in our Colleges and Universities the study of Theology, when recognized at all, is still dwarfed and perverted by the acceptance, on the part of both the teachers and the taught, of certain foregone doctrinal conclusions. The spirit, however, which would still retain Theological culture within ecclesiastical bonds is no longer, as of yore, a vigorous and formidable power; it is rapidly losing its vitality, and where it still exists it exhibits that character of feebleness and stolid obstinacy which indicates present dotage and coming dissolution. As regards the two convictions out of which this Institution arose, and on which it reposes,—the conviction that Theology is an essential feature in all

really liberal culture, and the companion conviction that to be cultivated effectually it must be cultivated upon terms of freedom from all dogmatic restrictions,—we may safely say that the latter of these is steadily winning acceptance throughout the higher ranks of cultured society. But while it is certain that this feature of our work is receiving a growing support and sympathy from public opinion, it is equally unquestionable that this same public opinion is in another direction exercising an influence by no means favourable to the studies that are prosecuted in this place. The unfavourable influence to which I refer, proceeds from what our forefathers would have regarded as a quite unexpected quarter. It is the former of the basal ideas on which our Academy is built that is in the present day being called in question with increasing emphasis. Not whether Theology shall be studied with doctrinal freedom or with doctrinal restrictions, but whether it is worth studying on any terms,—this is the portentous doubt that is rapidly taking shape and substance in many thoughtful and influential minds. Is Theology (we hear asked on every hand) a genuine Science, dealing with accessible and intelligible realities, or is it, like alchemy and astrology, an exploded pretension, a futile attempt of the human mind to peer through that phenomenal environment which forms an eternal and impassable limit to man's discernment and knowledge? It will be many years before the British mind arrives at a decisive settlement of this disturbing question, and in the meanwhile it is only to be expected that we, in common with all seminaries of theological learning, should feel somewhat of the paralyzing effects of this mental uncertainty and suspense. Times, indeed, have strangely changed since the days when Theology was the recognized Queen of the Sciences, and

dominated with imperious sway over the whole region of scientific and philosophical thought; for now our recently established Universities offer her no place in their curriculum, and some of our most eminent *savans* assert, and the assertion finds many to applaud it, that all theological discussions are on a par in interest and importance with the discussions of the politics of the inhabitants of the moon!

My object in the present Address will be to lay before you some considerations which seem to me to relieve any uneasiness we may feel at this emphatic and contemptuous depreciation of our special studies, and which will also, I hope, afford some ground for the expectation that Theology, chastened and purified by her present trials, will in the future emerge from her present obscurity, and again assume her royal rank; no longer, indeed, as heretofore, to rule with despotic sway over the intellectual life of mankind, but rather to occupy, with the common consent and joy of all earnest and devout thinkers, that supreme position in the sphere of knowledge which intrinsically belongs to God's inner revelation of Himself to the mind and heart of man, a revelation which, so far from tyrannizing over Science, Literature, and Art, will afford to Science the only key to its otherwise insoluble mysteries, will feed in Literature the sacred flame of genius, and will inspire Art with a creative impulse and a divine ideal.

I would remark, then, in the first place, that the present sentiment and language in regard to Theology appears to arise, not from any permanent incapacity in the soul for the discovery and recognition of theological truth, but rather from the circumstance that the present age is essentially an age of Transition, an age which is fast outgrowing the old idea of Theology, as a set of dogmas concerning man and

God to be accepted upon outward authority; and which, nevertheless, does not as yet see its way to the retaining of what is essential in these doctrines upon an inner and spiritual tenure. We are midway between what may be called the childish and the adult apprehension of the truths of Christianity; being in that stage of our national education which corresponds to the period of Illuminism in France and to what is termed the Clearing-up (Aufklärung) in Germany, an era on which we had already entered in the Deistic controversies of the last century, but which is now attaining its climax in the anti-theological dogmatism of our most "advanced" *savans* and philosophers.*

The dogmas which orthodox Christianity still retains, and which the Christian Church of patristic and mediæval times enjoined upon its members, inadequately express and incorrectly authenticate theological principles of the highest rank and of the most profound and lasting significance. The characteristic theological principle embodied in the life and teachings of Christ is the living presence and constant communion of the Spirit of God with the inner life of humanity. In the Hebrew prophets, and pre-eminently in Jesus, mankind attains to a clear realization of this God-consciousness, this vital relation of our human and dependent personalities to the infinite and absolute personality of the Father within us. When Jesus exclaims, "I am not alone, because the Father is with me," and, "The words that I speak

* For a full treatment of this era in the development of culture and religious thought, I would call attention to a very able and suggestive Essay on "Christianity and the Clearing-up," by Mr. Francis A. Henry, in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* (April and October, 1878), an Essay to which I am much indebted, though I am far from being able to accept in its entirety the Hegelian philosophy which pervades it and on which it is founded.

unto you are not mine, but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works," we are admitted to the glorious truth which constitutes the essence and the priceless worth of the Christian revelation. God is, indeed, the self-subsistent Principle of the universe, but He is also the Holy Spirit inseparably present in living communion with each individual soul, and wherever, as in Christ and Christ-like men, the human personality is wholly irradiated by the Divine, then is the Eternal manifest in the flesh, and he who is at once the Son of Man and the Son of God becomes the Light of the World. Christianity, therefore, explicitly discloses and emphasizes the profound truth, that while we are in indirect relation with the Eternal One by means of the connection between our sentiency and His energy in the physical world, and as such form a part of that constant succession of phenomena which we term Nature, we are also related to Him in a far more vital and essential way, in a way that we may term real or ontological, seeing that in our rational, moral and spiritual life, we are made sharers in His essence, and become in the deepest and truest sense children of God. Those, then, who at all adequately realize this characteristic truth of Christianity, will discern how intrinsically impossible it is that any adequate and satisfactory account of man can be given by treating him merely as a product of Evolution, as an object of Natural History, whose genealogy and biography Science may aspire to unravel and explain. Of what Paul calls the "body" and the "soul" of man, the Phenomenal Sciences have much valuable truth to learn and to impart; but with regard to the origin and nature of the Spirit and its relation to the Eternal Cause, this belongs to an altogether different plane of being and knowledge to that which Physical Science can investigate; it is a hidden mystery into which only Theology can penetrate, and in

which she discovers inexhaustible springs of inspiration, hope, and consolation. Theology and Philosophy discern that no analogy can possibly hold good between the spiritual or essential nature of man and those ever-changing phenomena whose laws of sequence it is the business of Science to investigate. These transient phenomena have evidently not the slightest permanence and substance of their own; they are no sooner born than they die, and all that is substantial and permanent pertains to that imperishable Being and Energy out of which they proceed, and in reference to which alone they become even scientifically intelligible. To the analogy, then, of our spirit with this immortal, all-creating Energy, and not to any supposed analogy between man and physical objects and phenomena, Theology looks, and must look, for light and insight in respect to man's essential nature and destiny.

These theological principles which I have endeavoured to describe, the early Christian Church struggled to express in the form of definite dogmas, and the creeds of Christendom are the result of this strenuous effort to appropriate and communicate the characteristic truths embodied in the life and teachings of Jesus. And though these truths are there expressed in a very inadequate and even distorted way, it was probably the only way which the mental condition of the theologians and that of their disciples rendered possible at the epoch in question. As I have already noted, orthodox Christianity has not only set forth these vital spiritual truths in a doctrinal form which conceals much of their real significance, but it has also failed to rightly authenticate them—has failed, I mean, to indicate the real grounds for certitude concerning them. But here also it would seem that the Church erred through necessity, and her error was probably the only accessible

road to the ultimate truth. She wished to guard her people against the serious mistake of supposing that these truths have only a subjective validity, so that each individual may be safely left to judge for himself as to their truth and their interpretation. The feeling of the early Church was, that these principles are objective revelations, that they possess a Divine authority before which the individual judgment should humbly bow down; and therefore she decreed that heresy is a deadly sin, that it is for the Church to interpret and expound these truths, and for the individual to simply submit himself to the ecclesiastical voice. In other words, the Catholic Church could not be content with saying that it is wise for those whose spiritual experience and insight is small, to look for light and guidance to those who enjoy a richer and deeper experience, and in regard to fundamental theological ideas to acquiesce in what has recently been called "the consensus of the competent;" she was driven by the exigencies of her position to go much further; to declare that the "competent" were abnormally inspired and authorized to deliver judgment on matters theological, and that he who did not heed their decision was guilty of sinning against the Holy Spirit. This inculcation of blind reverence for the authority of the Church led later on to evils of huge magnitude; but it must also be admitted that it did immense service in the cause of civilization in the days when the nations of Europe were in their childhood, and so, like children, needed to be restrained and guided by reverence for external authority. Nor was the Church mistaken, I think, in her feeling that the basal theological principles which constitute the essence of Christianity are an objective revelation, and therefore in no way dependent for their validity and authority upon subjective individual opinion. Her mistake was in misin-

terpreting the source and nature of that authority, and substituting for the inner authority given in spiritual experience, an outer authority to which the soul owes no natural allegiance. The real authority on which Christian truth reposes is found in the self-evident character it assumes as soon as the believer attains to adequate spiritual experience. The experience, however, does not *create* the truth, it simply *reveals* it. Our perception of the truth is indeed subjective; but the truth itself is felt to be objective to every human personality, and to abide eternally in that Infinite Personality in whom "we live and move and have our being." The great principles of religion are as objective to the spiritual vision as is the physical universe to the bodily eye. In the view of Jesus, our moral and spiritual perceptions are the direct result of the action upon our spirits of the Spirit of the Indwelling Father, and as that Father is in us all and through us all, the truths of morality and religion are as immutable as mathematical truth; with only this difference in the two cases, that whereas men are never without that sensational experience which is the occasion of our intuition of mathematical relations, they vastly differ in the range of their moral and spiritual experience, and consequently differ also in their degrees of insight into the essential truths of Ethics and Theology. The early Christian Church might have said to its members, "These doctrines are true, for Jesus received them from the Holy Spirit, and in proportion as you enter into the Divine life in him, they will be revealed, or become self-evident, to you also: already you have some faint inkling of their truth; cherish this, your higher nature; slight not the Holy Spirit, and your dawning spiritual perceptions shall rise at length into the sun-clear vision of the eternal truth as it is in Jesus." But the age was by no means

ripe for this mode of presenting spiritual truth; the Church adopted instead the principle of external authority; and the error embodied in this principle, though long latent, bore at length its inevitable fruit in the establishment of an intolerable ecclesiastical tyranny, and in wide-spread priestly corruption.

The time came when the minds of Christian believers outgrew this condition of tutelage. The corrupt practices of the priesthood awakened a growing suspicion of the validity of the pretensions of the Roman Catholic Church. Philosophy became a vigorous power, and the intellect which in the earlier scholastic period had laboured in the service of the Church, began at length to work independently of her, and ultimately to revolt against her. Classical Learning once more raised its head, and the sublime productions of Grecian genius compared favourably with the works which the Church had blessed. Physical Science, too, rapidly burst forth in dazzling brilliancy and power; and the human intellect pointed with ever-increasing confidence to its grand successes in the study of the external world. In truth, the critical spirit was now fairly awakened; the era of Illumination, the Clearing-up, had decisively set in. Thinkers, flushed with conquests in the spheres of classical erudition and of physical science, direct their attention to the consideration of ecclesiastical claims and orthodox dogmas. The Church and its doctrine must give an account of themselves at the bar of the enlightened Understanding; all mysteries must be disentangled and cleared up; as the Copernican theory had made a clean sweep of the complex cycles and epicycles of the Ptolemaic astronomy, so under the new *régime* of the liberated Understanding must the cloudy mysticism and gratuitous subtleties of scholastic metaphysics and old-fashioned theology

be cleared away, and a rational and intelligible account be given of Man and God and the Universe.

Now it cannot be doubted for a moment that this action of the newly-enfranchised intellect of man is eminently salutary; that it is, indeed, an indispensable stage in the higher education of humanity; and if in the present day liberal and rational theology suffers (as it assuredly does) from the activity of this busy spirit of critical inquiry, we have still every reason to believe that it is essentially a good spirit, and we may well feel confident that if only it be allowed to do its work in a thorough and complete, and not in a partial and one-sided way, it will finally discover and rectify its own mistakes, and will in the long-run strengthen rather than weaken the hold of the human mind upon all that is most inspiring, elevating, and consoling in Christian theology. But while we admit that the "Clearing-up," the process of so-called Illumination or Enlightenment, is essentially a healthy movement, and in so far as it directs itself against superstition, ecclesiastical tyranny, Bibliolatry, and blind reverence for doctrinal formulas, is an unmixed advantage, we cannot, I think, fail to discern that when it proceeds to deal critically with the permanent philosophical or theological principles to which the forms of doctrine owe their primal vitality, this critical spirit sets out in general with prepossessions and assumptions that must ultimately lead to the negation and destruction of all ethical and religious ideas; and not till Illuminism reaches this stage and finds that the logical outcome of its primary assumptions brings it into violent collision with moral and religious experiences that are an essential part of human nature, and are possessed of a persistency and strength which defy all sceptical assaults,—not till then do the *Illuminati* pause in their destructive work, and confessing their

inability to clear up by the critical Understanding the fundamental mystery of human nature, and to satisfy the yearnings of man's heart and mind, begin to recognize and admit the legitimate claims of that higher faculty which, under the name of Reason, Faith, Intuition, or Spiritual Discernment, has for its function to impart those direct revelations from the Indwelling Spirit which furnish the indispensable bases of rational science, of moral obligation, and of the beliefs and trusts of religion.

What, then, are these prepossessions and assumptions which at first lead the critical understanding astray, and cause it to mow down with indiscriminating hand both the tares of priestcraft and superstition, and also that precious grain of religious insight and experience which constitutes the soul's bread of life? It seems to me that the errors to which the newly-enfranchised understanding is peculiarly liable are mainly of two kinds;—first, the error of supposing that the spirit of man in all its relations is a finite and separate object, the properties of which can be treated of and explained like the phenomenal properties of a stone or a tree, or any other definite thing which scientific vision can isolate and investigate. As I have before endeavoured to show, this view is by no means in accordance with our conscious experience. Spirit can in no sense be thus regarded as a scientific object. It possesses that continuous self-identity which it is the characteristic feature of isolated phenomena not to possess. In its faculty of moral preference it manifests a true creative power which essentially distinguishes it from every object in the phenomenal world; and finally in its moral and religious consciousness it is in such intimate union with the Infinite and Eternal One, that whoever attempts to give an exhaustive account of a man has virtually undertaken to fathom the mysteries

of the Divine nature as well. In addition to this tendency to regard the spirit of man as an insulated substance which exists and can be satisfactorily studied apart from the Spirit of God, there is a second error to which inexperienced Illuminism is especially subject—an error, however, which is intimately allied with, if indeed it is not another form of, the one just described—I mean the disposition to take a purely subjective view of Truth and Goodness, or, in other words, to suppose that the criticism which has rightfully and effectually demolished the external authority of the Priesthood and of ecclesiastical tradition has also demolished all objective authority whatever, and so made Truth to be what each man troweth, and Goodness that which each man finds most conducive to his own happiness.

The natural fruits of these two tendencies may be observed operating under varying conditions in all Christian nations. When allied with a philosophy of Realism, as in France during the latter half of the last century, Illuminism passed from the Deism of Voltaire to the Scepticism of Diderot and the Encyclopædists, and finally to the thorough-going Materialism and Atheism of La Mettrie and of the *Système de la Nature;* while in its moral and political results it must be credited with producing some of the less favourable features of the French Revolution. French thought and practice developed the logical consequences of these tendencies with exceptional rapidity, soon learning the bitter but wholesome lesson of experience; and it is a noteworthy fact that during the last half-century the philosophy of that country has assumed far more harmonious relations with a rational and spiritual theology. The works of Maine de Biran, Cousin, and Jouffroy, with others of the same school, will furnish, I believe, no slight contribution to the religious philosophy of the future;

while Positivism, though French in its origin, has had to migrate to England to find a more congenial soil.

In our own country, the negative elements in Illuminism have clearly manifested themselves for more than a century, but they have been much slower here than in France in disengaging themselves from counteracting influences, and so disclosing their true character. At first, in alliance with the philosophy of Locke, they helped to inspire the Deistic writings of the last century, and it must be remembered with gratitude that in many of these Deists Illuminism, or the enfranchisement of the Understanding, revealed its best and noblest features—excellent features, which I am far from meaning to ignore or undervalue, though my present object is to emphasize what I conceive to be erroneous and mischievous ideas which have associated themselves, and still associate themselves, with this great and healthy intellectual movement. The operation of these destructive influences was long held in check among us by the deep religious sentiment which Puritanism had left behind it, and which still held its ground even in those who nominally disconnected themselves from Christianity. Natural Theology, as it was called, long co-existed in the same breast with the disintegrating Illuminist ideas; but the disease, though long unobserved, was slowly maturing, and fated in time to undermine and destroy all theological convictions; and in the vehement expressions of dissatisfaction which a few years ago issued from the disciples of Mr. J. S. Mill when they read their master's posthumous treatise on Theism, we hear the doom of Natural Theology and the triumph of negative Illuminism. And if we essay to trace the history of this mental change, we shall find that it shows itself first in making much of culture and little of devotion. Everything begins to have value only

in so far as it relates to the Subjective development and advancement of the individual. In times of deep religious earnestness, the personal self and its interests vanish into the background, and the relation of the soul to the Indwelling God becomes all in all. Under this religious enthusiasm, the spiritually Objective is all-important, and men are bound together into one grand brotherhood; for it is the Divine Personality, who is in them all, that is the main object of interest; and by thus dying to self and meeting in Him, individuals are linked together into a common organism, instinct with a common life. This religious attitude it is that is most favourable to patriotism, to philanthropic enthusiasm, and to all great national reforms; this, too, is the atmosphere in which art and literature flourish best, and the spirit of man achieves its most precious and abiding works. But the negative influences of Illuminism bear fruit the very opposite of this, and that fruit can nowhere be studied under more favourable conditions than as it presents itself in the social and religious history of this country from the time of the Deists to the present day.

As I have said, the immediate effect was generally to encourage a preponderant interest in all that relates to the subjective human personality, and a corresponding disregard of its objective spiritual relations to the Divine. Among theological and philosophical problems, the immortality of the soul assumes the leading place; and though the existence and personality of God are not as yet denied, still comparatively little interest is felt on this question, for the relation of the soul to God has already become a merely outward and mechanical one. The great argument relied upon as a proof of the existence of God is the Design argument; for, indeed, to the negative Illuminist no other

mode of access to Divine knowledge is possible, seeing that he has ignored the living spiritual relations which the soul sustains to its Indwelling God and Father. In morals, as might be expected, Utility becomes the test of Right. To refer the sense of moral obligation to the voice of Conscience, would be to admit the immediate action of God upon the spirit; and this, as we have seen, the negative assumptions of Illuminism can in nowise permit. The happiness of the individual becomes (as Schwegler remarks of the German Illuminists) the supreme end; and we are told at this stage of Illuminism of the "advantages" of religion, and are assured that it not only does not impair earthly enjoyment, but rather adds to it. Time will not allow me to trace the further developments of this movement, and to show the inevitable steps by which Theology decays and dies when associated with the mental prepossessions and tendencies which we are considering. It will suffice to remind you that the once-cherished belief in Immortality is now felt by the *Illuminati* to be no longer tenable; and, indeed, some of them are trying to persuade themselves that this belief is really of little or no consequence, and that Morals and the Religious Emotions can easily dispense with all hope of continued consciousness beyond the grave. And then, again, as to the Teleological argument, valuable as I believe it to be when associated with a different religious philosophy, it has by this time clearly proved its incompetency to preserve for the Illuminist any belief in a personal God.

We Englishmen are at present still in the full stream of these anti-theistic influences. It is true we are a Church-going people, and the connection of the doctrine of the divine authority of the Scriptures with the assertion of the right of free inquiry, has long controlled and modified in

our case the operation of the negative forces of Illuminism. It is evident, however, that the strength of the objective authority of the Bible is daily growing less, and every year a larger number of cultivated men and women lose their interest in Churches, and resort to literature and philosophy for light and guidance. The kind of philosophy, then, to which they have access has become a matter of the highest moment. Till very recently, our most popular English philosophy presented the extreme form of Illuminist negation. From the systems of Mr. Mill and Professor Bain, all mystery had been successfully eliminated. They never spoke of the phenomenal veil hiding the Unknowable, for it was a heresy with them to assert that there is any Unknowable. Sensations and our reflections upon sensations exhaust the sphere of possible knowledge; why, then (said they), trouble about anything else, for it is quite possible, and even probable, that they exhaust the sphere of possible Being also? By several powerful thinkers, and pre-eminently by Dr. Martineau, and by Professor Green in his introduction to Hume's philosophical works, it has been demonstrated that on this theory no knowledge at all would be possible, for that it is only in their relation to a permanent percipient mind that sensations become capable of being compared, and so affording a basis for knowledge.

It is not, however, metaphysical considerations like these that have practically lessened the popularity of this extreme Sensationalism. It is from the scientific quarter that its successful opponent has appeared. Science (in the person of Mr. Herbert Spencer) has at length discovered that even she cannot manage to get on without some limited amount of Theology, and that Mr. Mill's "permanent possibilities of sensation" will not satisfy the requirements of the theory of Evolution. In Mr. Spencer's

admission of the existence of an unknowable mystery lying behind man and nature, we have, I think, the first faint sign in this country that the negative tendencies of Illuminism have partly spent themselves, and that there is some ground for expecting the gradual rise and popular acceptance of a philosophy that will be willing and eager to restore rational and liberal Theology to that post of dignity from which a more superficial philosophy has dislodged her. Of course, I do not mean that Mr. Spencer's Agnosticism affords anything like the requisite philosophical basis for a satisfying religious belief; for notwithstanding the rhetoric of Professor Tyndall and others about the religious emotions, the simple fact remains that Emotions are correlative to Ideas, and the only emotion that can be felt in reference to an utterly unknown God is the emotion which Mr. Mallock aptly describes as "august bewilderment." But in reality the position of Mr. Spencer and his followers is practically untenable; and whoever accepts his modicum of Theology must and does accept much more. No one can regard the world of matter and of mind as a phenomenal manifestation of a Power that is not phenomenal, without at the same time seeing in this phenomenal manifestation some revelation of the Cause whence it proceeds, or of the Substance in which it inheres. To say that the Unknowable manifests itself, is to say that to that extent it ceases to be the Unknowable, and enters into intelligible relations with the knowing mind. This recognition of a theological mystery by minds saturated with the negative influences of Illuminism, is, I cannot but think, a fact of high significance. Agnosticism seems in some of its aspects to be a very slight remove from Atheism; but, if I mistake not, in other aspects it is the faintly glimmering dawn of a new era in the exercise of

the critical Understanding, and encourages in us the hope that the Clearing-up, which has hitherto been, as Mr. Henry truly says, "a Clearing-*out* of all spiritual and substantial interests," will ere long admit the existence in humanity of a faculty of Spiritual Discernment, and so exercise in reference to Theology no longer a negative and destructive, but a positive and purifying influence.

Hence there may be little ground for serious apprehension as to the future of religion in our land, if only the culture of our Laity can be made to assume a really complete and liberal character. Unfortunately at this critical juncture in the intellectual and religious life of England, our national education is anything but liberal and universal. By the existing constitution of our great seats of learning, the free and thorough study of the inner life of humanity, the spiritual consciousness of the divinest men, the utterances of the world's greatest seers and prophets, are excluded from the curriculum of study through which our Laity are encouraged to pass, and so the attention is engrossed and the mental vision dimmed and distorted by a too exclusive devotion to the physical and physiological aspects of our many-sided human experience. The result is as might be expected; our physiological relationship with the anthropoid apes is dwelt on with a detail and an emphasis beyond its intrinsic importance, while the vastly more momentous truths of our moral freedom, our consciousness of God's presence and sympathy, from which the mightiest practical changes in human life have confessedly proceeded,—these facts, as well as the historical development of theological ideas and the constant and most influential part which religious belief has played all through the social and political history of our race, are at present practically treated as unessential to sound and

liberal culture. This should not be: the want of the age is the thorough and philosophic study of the facts of man's religious experience as an indispensable correlative to scientific research. The following passage from the Essay to which I have before referred, seems to me to depict the present condition and urgent needs of society with singular truth and force:

"We have seen (says Mr. Henry) that the constitution of Mediæval Christianity was such as to preclude the possibility of spiritual advance within it. That advance was forced to begin in revolt, and continue on a reactionary principle as a wholly secular movement—with results that most will admit to be not wholly desirable. The world should learn by its own experience. It is evident that the one necessity of the day is that Religion should take the lead of intellectual movement—inspire it with a right spirit and direct it to the highest end. Let her speak to this age in a language it can understand, and her great truths will awaken the deepest interest. We all meet men of the day who say to us with a sad sincerity, Would I could believe as you do! To be superior to the superstitions of the vulgar is somehow not so all-satisfying as it used to be found. They look upon the simple believer, and almost unconsciously their half-contemptuous compassion is dashed with something like respect, changed to something like envy, as they contrast the peacefulness of positive conviction with the forlorn emptiness of their own 'enlightenment.' The cry of the Clearing-up was, 'Give me the portion of goods that falleth *to me*,' and with that intellectual provision it left the Father's house and wandered into a far country. But now it is turning unsatisfied from empty husks, and casting doubtful but longing eyes up to Heaven and God. Never was there a time when the proud heart of man so yearned to throw itself upon the bosom of Religion and sob itself to rest. But for this there must first be ministry to the *mind* diseased. The trouble with the age is in the thinking faculty, and that is

the organ that needs treatment. And not in the comparative study of Religions, nor in Mr. Arnold's odd fancies about the Bible, but only in a philosophic Christianity, will the cure be found."

There will, of course, be some difference of opinion as to the precise shape which this "philosophic Christianity" will assume; whether, for instance, it will wholly accord with the philosophy of religion with which the teachings of Dr. Martineau have happily made us familiar, and which is the dominant religious philosophy at Edinburgh and St. Andrews, or will, on the other hand, take its chief constituent elements from that English and American Hegelianism so ably represented at Oxford by Professor Green and Mr. F. H. Bradley, and at Glasgow by Professor Edward Caird, and which forms the staple of the excellent Essay in *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, from which the previous extract is taken. The most serious divergence between these two philosophies of religion appears to be in their respective positions towards the question of man's Moral Freedom. If I rightly understand the latter system of thought, it verbally asserts the existence of this freedom, but at the same time really removes the only philosophical foundation on which a genuine Libertarian doctrine can stand. It does not satisfy my moral consciousness to be told that the formation of my character is my own spontaneous work, and not the work of a force extrinsic to myself, unless it is further allowed that it was freely open to me to have fashioned my character otherwise than I actually have done. It is the virtual denial to the soul of man of this free preferential power, in the very able and stimulating writings of Green, Bradley, and Caird, which awakens in my mind a doubt as to the perfect competency of their system of thought to fully meet the requirements of

a satisfactory philosophy of religion. Apart, however, from this question of Liberty and Necessity, a question on which the profoundest religious teachers have been unable to come to an understanding, there are most important and encouraging points of fundamental agreement in the two systems of theological thought which at present appeal to the higher culture of our land. They both agree in declaring that God is to a most satisfying extent accessible to man's cognitive faculty; they agree in interpreting Nature by Spirit, and not Spirit by Nature; they agree, too, in maintaining that the Theology which is required to satisfy man's mental and spiritual needs is not to be sought in any supposed advance beyond Christianity, but rather in a clearer insight into the infinite significance and worth of the truths embodied in the life and teachings of Jesus. On this grand basis of agreement the coming Theology will be founded, a Theology which will, I believe, have everything to hope and nothing to fear from the freest and fullest researches into every department of human knowledge and experience.

C. Green & Son, Printers, 178, Strand.

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